

Thursday, May 1, 2025

Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0428

Contact details

Name:

Geraldine Tait

Do you wish to speak to your submission at a public hearing?

Yes

Topic 1: Are we focusing on the right things in the plan?

Do you agree that these focus areas capture Otago's public transport priorities?

No

Tell us more:

I might agree with the Five priority areas but I don't agree with your idea of what these should mean. 1. passenger experience, main concerns are safety, need for safety belts on main highways. 2. Trust: reliability, regular service, more than 3 return runs on Palmerston bus, on time, this bus is often late. Collaboration: consult present bus users (at the stop on the bus) and parents of high school students who rely on this service. 3. Environment: Yes to electric busses, good affordable bus = more passengers = good for environment. 4. Connection: new services, better frequency and longer hours for Palmerston bus. Oamaru service to include pick ups for Palmerston to Dunedin area. 5. Money: Public transport is a Public Good, spread the costs over the whole community, keep flat fares, no zones.

Topic 2: Should we support community transport services in smaller towns and rural areas?

Our proposal: we are considering the establishment of a subsidised community transport programme providing support for transport services in Otago's smaller towns and rural areas.

What do you think about this proposal?

Do you agree with ORC having a role in supporting community transport services?

Yes

Are there other initiatives or programmes that you think Council should be considering?

Yes

Tell us more:

Community transport services might be great for some rural communities but it should not be considered the only option to provide connectivity for more places around Otago. On-demand busses or vans provided by the ORC could be effective and efficient and greatly help those needing to attend appointments or access other services. Staring bus services from Oamaru which could also be used by people on the North Coast (Palmerston- Dunedin) would be very good.

Topic 3: Should we increase our passenger fares?

Our proposal: we are considering increasing the base fare for adult Bee Card passengers from \$2 to \$2.50. This would effectively increase bus fares for all passengers using Bee Cards by 25%.

What do you think about this proposal?

Should Council increase the adult Bee Card fare?

Yes

Tell us more:

If this allowed the continuation of the flat fare, did not lead to further large increases in the future, I think most people would accept this. Also if it is linked to improving services in areas where the busses are not as frequent or do not provide a good service in the evening or weekends.

Topic 4: Should we charge more for longer trips?

Our proposal: we are considering introducing a zone fare system to our bus networks in Dunedin and Queenstown. Under this system, passengers travelling further distances across multiple zones will pay a higher fare than those travelling short distances within one zone.

What do you think about this proposal?

Should Council charge more for longer trips?

No

Tell us more:

No I am very opposed to the reintroduction of zones. This will lead to huge fare increase for people living on the outskirts of Dunedin. It has not been properly consulted on because there is no information on how much fares could rise for the different zones. It will also impact high school students and add to financial stress on many families. The Ministry of education has already and will continue to reduce the free services it provides for school students. This will place more demand on the public transport system in future, it needs to stay affordable. It will drive people away from using the bus, people choose the bus because it is affordable but if fares rise, people will weigh up the convenience of private car use vs the cost of a bus. If bus users fall, the whole system is at risk. We need to look for ways to increase bus usage

and this is obviously good for the environment and to reduce congestion.

Topic 5: Should we keep our free fares for children (5-12 years)?

Our proposal:

- A. Retain free fares (100% discount) for children (5-12 years), **AND**
- B. Standardise our concession discount for youth (13-18 years) to 40% across both the Dunedin and Queenstown networks. For example, if the adult fare is \$2, youth pay \$1.20, or if the adult fare is \$2.50, youth pay \$1.50.

What do you think about this proposal?

Should Council retain free fares (100% discount) for children (5-12 years)?

Yes

Tell us more:

Yes all bus trips for children should be free.

Should Council standardise our concession discount for youth (13-18 years) to 40% across both the Dunedin and Queenstown networks?

No

Tell us more:

Bus travel for all high school children traveling to and from school should be free, paid for by the government. The fare should be \$1.20 flat fare if there is one. There should be no zones, especially for 18 years and under.

Any other comments?

Let us know if you have any other comments or ideas on the topics discussed in the Draft Regional Public Transport Plan.

As a resident of Warrington, have talked to a lot of local people both in person and via various Facebook groups (Waikouaiti, Karitane, Warrington and Waitati) virtually everyone I have had feedback from opposed zones and the rise in fares that would result. They would like more weekday busses to fill gaps in the present very inadequate service. Many people spoke of it not meeting their transport needs, there is potential for many more bus users if more services were added. There was concern about the rise in cost of fares for high school students if zones come in. There was a strong belief that public transport is a Public Good and that it benefits the environment and improves equity for those who are too young, too old or disabled to drive. The increasing cost of petrol is also a consideration for people living out here. The population of Warrington has grown considerably in the last five years with a lot of in-fill in the village, it now has more people than Karitane including a lot of young families. It is time Warrington was included on the Palmerston bus run, the footpath between Warrington and Evansdale is in very poor condition, there is no street lighting and it is a 3k walk to and from the bus stop at Evansdale.

Submission to ORC draft Public Transport Plan

The plan is suggesting various changes:

I believe public transport is a Public Good and the costs should be shared, despite the government pressuring the ORC to claw back more money from bus users there are many benefits to the whole community having a modern, efficient, regular public transport system. Some people, the young, very old and disabled don't have a choice but it also makes sense for able bodied workers to be able to jump on a bus which is affordable, regular, comfortable, non-polluting and removes the problem of finding and paying for car parking.

1. Putting up the present flat fare from \$2 to \$2.50, I think there may not be too many objections to this especially if the flat fare remains for the whole network.
2. **Reintroducing zones** which would mean people in our area Waitati, Evansdale and Warrington will be in Zone 2 and people in Merton, Karitane, Waikouaiti and Palmerston will be in zone 3. **This could lead to major fare increases** for all local bus users. **I think our community will be strongly opposed this.** The flat fare of \$2 for all bus users came in in 2020, it has led to a strong growth in bus usage, 54% increase over four years. There is the risk that if fares to our area greatly increase people will take their cars to town rather than use public transport which will lead to more congestion on the roads and a bad outcome for the environment. In 2010 there were 7 fare zones ranging in fares from \$1.90 to \$6.40, by 2013 fares to Mosgiel were \$6.70. I remember fares to Palmerston being over \$11, our area was outside the seven zones with a separate fare scale.
3. On page 52 of the draft plan, there is mention of the possibility of **an on-demand service**. This is in place in some centres elsewhere in NZ, people book in and then the bus turns up near to where the user lives at a set time. In areas like Karitane and Warrington if no one books, the bus does not need to detour to pick people up. This could be a great idea.
4. There are also plans to look at **a service from Oamaru**, this could link in to our current service and provide another option for local people getting to and from Dunedin.
5. Fares for 13 -18-year-olds are to increase from \$1.20 to \$1.50 but with the reintroduction of zones many local families could be paying big \$ for their kids to get to school, zones would apply to this age group too. There are a lot of high-school kids on the local bus, especially since the ministry of Ed reduced the number of schools eligible for the frees service. It is likely the Ministry will reduce school bus services even further in the future resulting in more high school students relying on the public bus service.
6. Increasing the number of electric busses is great but also consider safety improvements such as providing safety belts on services that are on roads with higher than 50k speed limits.

7. Although Community Transport Trusts may help people needing to travel for health appointments or shopping who are living in isolated areas, I hope this do-it-yourself solution will not be seen as the way of the future for all semi-rural towns and villages.

History of public transport Palmerston to Dunedin.

Historically The North Coast was one of the first places to have any form of public transport, unfortunately it is a sad story of slow decline and neglect, we now have the worse public transport service of any area in Dunedin.

The railway line between Dunedin and Christchurch was completed in 1878. The trains took passengers as well as freight. The timetable in 1879 (Blueskin Days, Church, Strachan, and Strachan 2007) included stops at Waitati, Evansdale (by request), Warrington (by request), Seacliff, and Palmerston.

Palmerston to Dunedin: departing 6.30am, 9.40am, 3pm, 5.25pm, 7pm.

Dunedin to Palmerston: departing 6am, 7.25am, 10.15am, 3.30pm.

Although obviously not used by people to commute to work or school this was the beginning of public transport in our area following the age of the stage coach.

By 1926 a regular (but rather slow) bus service connected Palmerston and Dunedin with the most frequent busses running on a Sunday presumably to provide a connection for family or recreational purposes.

A regular railcar passenger service began in the 1950's through to the 1970's providing transport for both workers and high school students. Railways also ran a passenger bus service during this time.

Both the trains and busses traveled via, Waitati, Evansdale, Warrington, Seacliff and Waikouaiti to Palmerston but at some point, the bus service no longer went over Mount Cargill or Coast Road, excluding Warrington and Seacliff from a public transport service, Although the Ministry of Education school busses still covered these areas.

Bus services to different areas on the outskirts of Dunedin

How do present day services to other outlying areas of Dunedin compare to the service to Palmerston? **People in the Waikouaiti Coast, Palmerston areas have a much poorer bus service than other outlying areas.**

Peninsula: 149 returns, Brighton 101 returns, Palmerston 21 returns per week.

Portobello covers the Otago Peninsula, Portobello Road from Portsmouth Drive to Harwood. Population of the Otago Peninsula Community Board is 4,405 (2018)

More than 20 runs (to and from the Hub) per week day, 16 on Saturday and 13 on Sunday and public holidays.

Starting at 6.57am every 30 mins to 8.57, then every 60 mins 9.59 -3.59 and 6.59 pm to 9.59. Saturday and Sunday services are every 60 mins.

Brighton, Abbotsford, Green Island service includes part of the Saddle Hill Community Board area, population of Brighton 1,422 (2018) and Waldronville 522 (2018). It also includes Abbotsford population 2,817 (2018), total population served by this bus run 4761. This service is slightly complicated because passengers traveling from Dunedin must change busses at Green Island by using route 70, a Dunedin to Mosgiel service which has 36 runs per week day.

16 return runs per weekday, 10 runs per weekend day and public holidays (one extra run on Saturdays).

The Brighton bus runs every 30 mins from 6.25am – 8.25 am, every 60 mins from 9.25am -7.25 pm. It runs every 60 mins in weekends.

Palmerston bus service includes the Waikouaiti Coast Community Board area population 4143 (2018) and Palmerston population 980, total population 5123.

This area has 3 return bus runs per week day.

4 hours and 5.45 hours between busses to Dunedin. 7 hours then 2.5 hours between busses from Dunedin.

Saturday has 4 bus runs starting at 8am in Palmerston, there are also two late busses on a Saturday from Dunedin at 9pm and 11pm.

Sunday only has 2 bus runs, 8.45 hours apart and from Palmerston and 5 hours apart from Dunedin.

Only once a week on a Saturday is any service 60 minutes apart, biggest gap is on a Sunday when there is an 8.45 hours gap between the morning and afternoon service to Dunedin.

I hope you are beginning to see why I think this area is transport disadvantaged. The distances traveled are much greater out here but the time each bus run takes should be considered, our busses are on the main highway a lot of the time doing 90k (ish), the road to Portobello is 40k for considerable parts of the journey.

Not only is the service very infrequent to the point it does not meet the transport needs of many local people but it excludes people living in Warrington which has a growing population, bigger than Karitane. I am asking on behalf of our local community for the bus service to increase from 3 return trips per week day to at least Five and that all bus runs include Warrington.



